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Elements of Rhetoric and English Composition. Second High School Course.

By G. R. CARPENTER, Professor of Rhetoric and English Composition in Columbia University. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900.

A Second Manual of Composition. Designed for use in secondary schools.

By EDWIN HERBERT LEWIS, Professor of English in the Lewis Institute, Chicago. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900.

Practical Composition and Rhetoric. By WILLIAM EDWARD MEAD, Pro-

fessor of the English Language in Wesleyan University, with the coöperation of WILBUR FISK GORDY, Principal of the North School, Hartford, Conn. Boston and Chicago: Sibley & Ducker, 1900.

A Modern Composition and Rhetoric (Brief Course), Containing the Princi-

ples of Correct English for Schools. By LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH, Professor of English, Tabor College, Ia., and JAMES E. THOMAS, Master of English, Boston English High School. Boston: Benj. H. Sanborn & Co., 1900.

Specimens of the Forms of Discourse. Compiled and edited by E. H. LEWIS,

Professor of English in the Lewis Institute, Chicago. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1900.

Shakspeare's Julius Caesar. Edited with Notes and an Introduction. By

GEORGE C. D. ODELL, Instructor in English, Columbia University. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. (Longmans' English Classics), 1900.

IF any teacher of English wishes to see how great has been the advance in the last half century in the art of writing elementary text-books in composition, let him compare with some of the older "Rhetorics," "Young Composers," "Arts of Composition" and the like, this latest work of Professor Carpenter's. Between those books, with their verbose trivialities, their stale and not too decent jests, their jumble of logic and grammar and homiletics, and this concise, clean-run, business-like little manual the interval is wide. Indeed, Professor Carpenter's book is dangerously near being too good. A man who writes, as he does, with infallible good sense is a disturber of the public comfort. Such justness of statement, such unflinching tact, such utter sanity in the point of view—these things come little short of an affront. One's hand goes out involuntarily to the oyster-shell. Perhaps, however, we may, after all, if we approach the work in a properly hostile spirit, discover here and there a redeeming flaw. For my part I find the selection from Steevens on page 60 not to my taste. It is too feverish, too strident. It is the sort of description for which high-school sophomores should cultivate a distaste. Nor do I like all parts of the treatment of Method of Proof on page 109. Does Professor Carpenter mean, in the given example, that anyone after a rain will deny that the grass is wet or that the water is standing in a pail? Who doubts the facts? The question is, What do the facts mean? Again, turning to the next page, why, in a world where fair forms are rare enough at best, choose as illustration so disagreeable a subject as tuberculosis of the lungs? On the other hand—it being impossible longer to keep up the pretence of hostility—I cannot sufficiently admire the ingenious exercises in composition which are scattered through the lessons. He is a dull and obstinate youth who can hold out against their fascination. It is a comfort also to discover as one reads them, that they are based on

the psychology of expression, since this assures not only their effectiveness in practice but their soundness in theory.

To turn from Professor Carpenter's thin volume to the plump *Manual* of Dr. Lewis is like passing from classic to romantic. Professor Carpenter's book has the chasteness, the reserve, the simplicity of a Grecian temple. We can imagine the author on the steps saying to the assembled youth — come to scoff but remaining to admire — "This, my young friends, is the Temple of Rhetoric. You see how simple it is. No complexity of structure, no elaborateness of ornament, no winding passages. Just these few Doric columns, just this roof. That's all there is to it." Dr. Lewis, on the other hand, may be likened to an alert and enthusiastic but rather mercurial guide, who conducts his pupils breathlessly through an apparently endless wood; now running far ahead and shouting back to them to come on; now helping them with playful exaggeration of kindness over some boggy place in the path; now excitedly climbing a tree to scan the horizon and make sure the way has not been missed; finally, after much clambering up and down, much skipping from rock to rock, and much treading of mazes, regretfully parting from his charges and telling them with a friendly tap on the shoulder to keep right on in the way they have been going. And the pupils, we may be sure, will be as sorry to lose their instructor as he is to part from them. All this is as much as to say that the book is good reading. Whether it is also, if I may so express myself, good teaching, is a more difficult question. One feature at least of the method of teaching proposed by the author gives me pause. I refer to the plan of having the student drive five long themes abreast through several months at the beginning of the year, revising them over and over with reference to each new principle that is learned. The successful carrying out of such a program as that would demand in the teacher angelic sympathy—which Dr. Lewis has, and in the pupil angelic patience—which most pupils have not. But in regard to this, as to all other new devices of teaching composition, one should try to keep one's mind free from prejudice and await the results of experiment.

Professor Mead, with the aid of Principal Gordy, has worked over and considerably enlarged his *Elementary Composition and Rhetoric*. If the first book was acceptable to teachers, the revision should be doubly so, for it is greatly improved in every part. The choice of illustrative matter seems particularly happy.

The statements in the preface of Smith and Thomas's *Modern Composition and Rhetoric* that "the authors have made no literary pretensions in what they have written," and that "they have been glad to sacrifice the graces of style," imply a peculiarly vicious theory of rhetoric, of which, fortunately, only a few traces are to be found in the body of the work. The text is rather strikingly devoid of original ideas. The authors appear to have drawn their materials, as they avow, "from the whole storehouse of rhetorical doctrine," and to have put the selected ideas together very much as a mechanic assembles the parts of a bicycle. Nevertheless it is a readable book and may be a useful one; and, as experience proves, there is nothing in the method of its construction to prevent it from having a very wide sale. Books intended to facilitate the study of literary types have been increasingly popular of late, the class-room work for which they are adapted having proved to be highly interesting and profitable. The latest contribution to this class is Dr. Lewis's *Specimens of the Forms of Discourse*. It has no footnotes such as one finds in Professor Genung's *Handbook*, but instead, at the end of each selection, a neatly turned appreciation, similar to those in Saintsbury's *Specimens of English Prose*. These appreciations, taken together, constitute a

singularly illuminating treatise on the technique of prose. The specimens illustrate the four primary types and also criticism, and are in the main so admirably chosen that the one cheap, ready-made thing, Moffett's description of Marconi's Wireless Telegraph, shocks the reader as if he had come upon a chromo in a gallery of old masters.

The great obstacle to the proper editing of Shakespeare for the young is Furness's *Variorum*. With that work out of the way, the latest editor might perhaps forget that the thing had ever been done before, and in this happy state of mind he might go at the task simply and straightforwardly and without sophistication, as a writer for the young always ought to do. As it is, the temptation to have a fling at the commentators or to try one's hand at a *crux* is too strong to be resisted. The result is a book ostensibly for the young, but really aimed at the expert Shakespearean. It is to Dr. Odell's credit that, making allowance for the natural weakness of human nature, he has resisted nobly. His aim, he says, is "to put himself in the place of an instructor trying to interest the average class of young people in the study of one of Shakespeare's best known and best liked plays." In this he has been fairly successful. The scholarly enthusiasm of his Introduction strikes the happy medium between sentimentality and pedantry. The notes, although more numerous than they need to be, are suggestive, accurate, and, with few exceptions, right to the point, answering the questions which the average pupil, reading the play for the first time, would be likely to ask. Many of them are barbed with sharp-pointed little queries which the pupil is expected to answer for himself. There are also helpful suggestions for study.

If Dr. Odell fails anywhere to put himself in the place of the good instructor, it is in the section on The Play, beginning on page xxi of the Introduction. I refer not to the matter, which is excellent, but to the author's attitude to the pupil. "Fortunate is the boy," says the editor, "who first makes acquaintance with Shakespeare through the pages of Julius Caesar." And again: "It is a combat; that is why it appeals to the lad of spirit, who must always rejoice in a fight between opponents evenly matched, whether in football or in some great world struggle." And once more: "For the boy's suffrage, must be noted the splendid rhetorical quality of the writing. What boy does not love an orator?" etc. To my ear this rings false. The editor is playing (quite unconsciously, no doubt) the rôle of Mr. Holiday.¹ He is making a dead-set at the boy *qua* boy, something which every high-school lad of spirit will properly resent. Boys of that age prefer to be addressed as men.

I will make one or two suggestions for the next edition. The note on the phrase "For if thou path" is worse than useless, for it not only tells the pupil nothing, but hints at things which are withheld from him. On page xxix the conclusion that "there was almost absolute uncertainty in Shakespeare's time as to the proper form of the nominative and objective cases of the personal pronouns" is too sweeping. It is contradicted on every page of the play. Finally—though this is a matter of taste—I do not like the phrase "this big human fact, this Shakespeare" on page xlviii. It suggests painfully the sort of thing one hears at teachers' institutes.

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Better known as Rollo's father.